

# ecoNews — Wire —

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

July 1, 2004

For immediate release

1. **Drinking water 2003 compliance report completed**
2. **EPA says Iowa meeting tougher particulate pollution standards**
3. **DNR recommends rendering after hogs die in Jefferson County**

## **DRINKING WATER 2003 COMPLIANCE REPORT COMPLETED**

DES MOINES, IOWA— According to a recent state public water supply compliance report completed by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, there were no waterborne diseases or deaths were reported from public drinking water supplies in 2003. Under the 1996 Reauthorized Safe Drinking Water Act, the State of Iowa is required to publish an annual report of the status of its drinking water program.

Dennis Alt, supervisor of the DNR's Water Supply Engineering Section, said 2003 was a typical year from the statistics, although there were more requirements of both the water systems' staff and the state oversight staff due to the implementation of new federal regulations.

"We saw a decline in both the number of violations of acute contaminants, and the number of systems with those violations when compared with the previous year, which is the direction we want to head," Alt said. "However, we did have several larger systems with health-standard violations in 2003, which is unusual."

These are some of the report's highlights:

- 88.3 percent of the population served by Iowa's public water systems received water that was in compliance with all health-based standards.
- 91.7 percent of the 2,037 regulated public water supplies met all health-based standards.
- The 273 health standard violations were comprised of the following: non-fecal coliform bacteria (57.1 percent), fecal coliform bacteria (3.7 percent), copper (9.9 percent), nitrate (9.5 percent), lead (8.1 percent) and other contaminants (arsenic,

nitrite, radium 226 & 228, total trihalomethanes, turbidity, and uranium (11.7 percent)).

- Major monitoring and reporting requirements were met by 81.0 percent of Iowa's public water supply systems. Of the 831 violations, coliform bacteria and nitrate monitoring violations were the most prevalent (62.9 percent).
- The requirement for all of the 1,154 community public water supply systems to compile and distribute an annual consumer confidence report to their customers was met by 98.5 percent of the systems.

The "Public Drinking Water Program 2003 Annual Compliance Report" has been distributed to the Environmental Protection Commission, Governor's Office, Iowa Legislature, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The report is available on the DNR's Web site at <http://www.state.ia.us/epd/wtrsuply/report/report.htm> or by contacting the Water Supply Section, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 401 SW 7th St., Suite M, Des Moines, Iowa 50309-4611 or at (515) 725-0282.

**For more information, contact Dennis Alt at (515) 725-0275.**

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## **EPA SAYS IOWA MEETING TOUGHER PARTICULATE POLLUTION STANDARDS**

DES MOINES — The entire state of Iowa is meeting tougher federal air standards for particulate pollution — tiny flecks of soots and aerosols that can harm lungs and complicate heart disease, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced this week.

Twenty-two states have at least one or more areas not meeting the standards for the microscopic sized soots, which cause 15,000 premature deaths every year across the nation.

In April, the EPA also announced Iowa was meeting tougher ozone smog standards. Iowa is one of 16 states that meet both standards on a statewide basis.

"Many Iowans don't realize the huge human health benefits by having clean air," said Brian Button, DNR air information specialist. "High levels of particulate pollution is linked to missed days of school and work, doctor and hospital visits, illness and premature death," he said.

Button said those states not meeting the standards are faced with higher business and industry costs and special programs to test vehicle exhaust.

Despite meeting the standards, several days of unhealthy levels of both particulate pollution and summertime ozone smog are monitored in Iowa annually. An increase the number of days could lead to Iowa's air quality not meeting the standards in the future. "Maintaining good air quality in Iowa is clearly an ongoing effort," said Button.

On those days of unhealthy air, the DNR issues health advisories to local media so sensitive populations can limit outdoor activity.

**For more information contact Brian Button at 515-281-7832.**

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## **DNR RECOMMENDS RENDERING AFTER HOGS DIE IN JEFFERSON COUNTY**

BATAVIA – A veterinarian confirmed that heat caused the death of 138 hogs at Tri-L Farms about four miles south of Batavia.

Larry Hickenbottom discovered the dead hogs on Wednesday after an electric failure and malfunction of an emergency drop curtain drastically reduced air circulation in one of his four swine buildings.

Hickenbottom considered burial, rendering and composting as options for carcass disposal. The DNR searched soils maps to try to locate an on-farm site for burial of the 200-pound animals, but did not find suitable sites because of high groundwater levels.

"Groundwater can be found just one to two-and-one-half feet below the soil surface, making few sites in that area suitable for mass burials of animals," said Deb Frundle, a geologist with the DNR.

Frundle added that the swine facility is fairly close to a stream and that groundwater monitoring would be required if the animals had been buried on the site.

After considering the different options, Hickenbottom picked rendering for disposal.

"This was a manageable amount of animals for rendering, especially when you consider the costs and time involved with on-site monitoring," said Josh Sobaski, an environmental specialist with the DNR Washington field office.

Producers who are in a similar situation should consider the following pros and cons of composting, burial and rendering before making a decision on disposal method:

- cause of death, particularly if disease or chemicals are the cause,
- costs of disposal,
- soils suitability for mass burials,
- distance from wells, streams and other environmentally sensitive areas,
- costs of monitoring when mass burial is used, and

- time and convenience of each method.

Producers should contact the DNR if mass burial or emergency disposal is being considered.

“We can help you identify soil types and hydrology so that environmental risks are avoided,” Frundle said.

**For more information, contact Josh Sobaski at 319-653-2135; Deb Frundle at 515-242-6849; or John Pecchia, an environmental specialist in the DNR Mason City field office for information about composting.**